3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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492 manche was mounted that he exhibited himself to best advantage. "Here he is at home and his skill . . . is truly astonishing."[29]

492 726 868 One of the first things a Comanche child learned was to ride. He started riding in a pack on his mother's back long before he could walk. Next he was strapped to her saddle on a gentle mare. By the time he was four or five he was off on a pony of his own. Both boys and girls were taught to ride with or without a saddle. Girls were taught to ride astride and became almost as much at home on horseback as boys. But it was not enough for the Comanche boy merely to learn to ride. He had to be a trick rider. Day after day, month after month, he practiced in drill. He learned to pick up objects from the ground while his mount was traveling at full speed. At first, small and light objects were selected, but as the boy grew older and more proficient, heavier and more bulky objects were exchanged for the lighter ones, until at last, unassisted and at full speed, he might be able to pick up from the ground and swing across his horse the body of the heaviest man. To rescue a fallen comrade was the highest obligation of any Comanche warrior. To leave a comrade on the field to be stripped, mutilated, and scalped by desecrating enemies was a disgrace to The People. Every man was expected to be able to meet the challenge when the need arose—and he had to be able to do it alone. Generally, however, rescues were made by two men working togther. Rushing neck by neck on either side of the prostrate person, both riders stooped at the same instant and swung the body in front of one of the riders. This stunt was practiced over and over on all kinds of ground until riders and ponies could do it without a hitch.

491 726 In attack, the Comanche, like other horse Indians, made his mount a mobile shield between himself and his enemy. How many a trooper or pioneer within his defensive corral of wagons has cursed at the scudding Indian whirling about him, loosing arrows from beneath his horse's neck, with nothing showing but a leg hooked over the horse's backbone! The key to this fancy trick was a loop of rope attached to the cantle or, if the rider was bareback, plaited into his steed's mane. With the loop slipped over his head and under his outside arm, a trained rider (and what Comanche was not?) clung to

[29] R. B. Marcy, *Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852*, 32 Cong., 2 sess., *Sen. Exec. Doc. 54*, 103.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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playing at the tasks which her mother performed. She was given a doll, dressed usually in deer skin, which she took everywhere with her. She might be lucky enough to have a toy cradle and carry her doll on her back in the fashion of her mother. As she grew older, she learned to dress and undress her doll and to make for it the necessary articles of clothing. Little girls learned to ride almost by the time they were able to sit astride a horse and hold the reins. Although they never spent as much time as the boys in practice, they became good horsewomen, so proficient that often the white campaigner was unable in the midst of battle to distinguish men from women.

There was a very close relationship between a girl and her mother's sisters. They were not called aunt, but *pia*, "mother," and the relationship was that of a mother to her daughter. A woman called her sister's child her own and aided in its instruction. There was even less formality between a girl and her mother's sister than between the girl and her mother. It was the grandparents who spoiled the child. The maternal grandmother was the girl's favorite. She was called *kaku* and she in reciprocity called her daughter's children *kaku*, too. Their social positions were theoretically equivalent. The *kaku* was likely to be congenial and indulgent with the child, and the relationship was much more intimate than between mother and daughter.[4]

As a girl grew older, she was given small tasks. She was first required to carry water and, when still older, she began to go for wood. Parties of girls, sometimes accompanied by a few women, went out from camp to bring in the wood. They also went with the women to gather wild fruits, roots, and nuts. At about twelve years of age, the girl began to learn to cut out moccasins, to cook, to dress hides, to make and set up a tipi—all the things essential for becoming the wife of a warrior.

The passage of a girl from childhood to young womanhood was an important occasion in her life, and was hardly less so to her family and the tribe. But since there was little anxiety about becoming a woman and a girl was already well-prepared for womanhood, and since the Comanches were a work-a-day, unceremonious people, there were no puberty rites. Among well-to-do families the event was the

[4] For a detailed analysis of Comanche kinship relations and terminology see, Hoebel, "Comanche and Hekandika Shoshone Relationship Systems," *loc. cit.*, 440–57.

The Comanches

881 occasion for ceremonial feasting and celebration, and a daughter who was a favorite child in a well-off family might run over the prairie hanging to the tail of a fast pony so that she would be agile and active. This was the only magical activity associated with puberty. She was then ready to marry and become the mother of children and thus to contribute her part toward adding to the number and, therefore, the [582] strength of the tribe. By the time she was sixteen the chances are her marriage had been consummated.

•868 A boy learned to ride almost as soon as he learned to walk. From earliest babyhood he was familiar with horses and their motions, riding behind his mother, clinging to her or to the horse's mane, or strapped to her saddle. He thus gained confidence, learned balance, and, by practice, learned to ride an old gentle pack horse; by the time he was four or five years old, he was expected to be able to manage a pony of his own; and by the time he was six, he was riding young colts bareback. Sometimes while learning to ride, he was bound on the pony by a rawhide lariat while another boy held the pony by another lariat and circled the pony about until the boy literally became a part of the animal. He received the criticisms of companions, father, mother, and other relatives and onlookers. If he fell, he was laughed at by the girls and others, but he did not become angry with his critics. Soon afterwards he had to help herd the ponies. He early became expert in the use of the rope for catching horses and henceforth spent much of his outdoor time on horseback.

603 By the time the boy was five or six years of age, he was given a 868 bow and some blunt arrows and taught to shoot, usually by his grandfather. This was natural enough since the father was still engaged in war and hunting, while the older man had probably passed the period of active life and thus had the leisure to make bows and arrows and to devote a good deal of his time to the education of his grandson. Consequently, there developed between the two an intimate relationship whose pattern was one of indulgence and congeniality linked with the less severe forms of authority-obedience. The grandfather taught the grandson to ride, to shoot, to make bows and arrows, and the secrets of the hunt and the trail. He told him stories of his boyhood and early manhood, instructed him in the tribal history and traditions, legends and religion, and many other things

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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that the boy would need to know. The maternal grandparent was the boy's favorite, and each called the other *tɔ́k*. 868 603

After the grandfather, those next most likely to manifest interest in instructing the boy were his father, elder brother, and father's brothers, who were called "father," *apʼ*. With the mother's brother, who was called *aʔa*, "uncle," less formal respect was customary, for the *aʔa* and the boy were on a footing of easygoing comradeship. A boy could borrow his *aʔaʼs* goods without asking, and he could count on his *aʔaʼs* aid if he got into a scrape. The uncle, also, in reciprocity, addressed his sister's son as *aʔá*. A man called a brother's child his own[5] and addressed it as "son" or "daughter." 868 604

After the boy had received his bow and had been instructed in its use, he spent much time in practice. As he improved in skill, he hunted small birds with other little fellows of his age; and as he grew older, he ranged farther and farther from camp in search of larger game. He learned that hunting was not merely for pleasure but was serious work, that his ability as a hunter might mean the difference between food, shelter, and clothing and starvation and exposure. He was encouraged to become a good hunter, and when successful, he received the coveted praise. His first great kill was celebrated as an important event in his life. 868

He learned to approach game with patience, caution, and quietness; learned to take advantage of vegetation, of physical features, and of the wind; learned how to make a surround—lessons which would be valuable in real hunts when he grew up. He came to understand the signs of the prairie, how to observe the habits of wild animals, to know where they might be found, and how they reacted under different conditions.

A boy was allowed much liberty, and although his parents were firm, he was seldom scolded or punished. He was not expected to perform any menial labor about the camp and was always treated with great consideration, for "he is going to be a warrior and he may die young in battle." 858

The Comanche boy in his daily life was learning to be self-reliant, but at the same time his play habits were fostering manly comradery. Most of the daytime hours of the pre-adolescent boys were 857

[5] Informant: Medicine Woman.

17: Casagrande E.L-5 (1940) 1965 NO6 Comanche NO6
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COMANCHE BABY LANGUAGE

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The Comanche language[1] reveals an unusually rich and formalised vocabulary of special baby words which were used in teaching the child to speak. Their use began when the child was old enough to understand, at about one year according to informants, and dropped off as the child matured and learned the normal, adult locutions at the age of 3 to 4. If a child persisted in using these words after the age of 5 or so, it would be laughed at and ridiculed for its babyish ways. Today English holds sway and these baby words no longer function actively, although children in those families or households where there are older persons who speak only Comanche may have some knowledge of them. So of necessity these data were recorded from the lips of adult speakers, most of whom, however, maintain a lively memory of the baby forms.

The following list was checked with eight informants and is probably exhaustive. Where known, the adult form or derivation is given in brackets after the translation of the baby word or words.

ʔáʔh, ʔáx, ʔáʔhA *something nasty or dirty; feces, urine, penis, a smell; warning to get away from something dirty; I have wet, dirtied myself; command for baby to defecate.*

ʔaʔhá·ʔ *no good!* (said to baby).

The next two forms are used in speaking to and by older children. They are derived from the baby words, but with regular verbal suffixes.

ʔáʔhi·kwhA *go off and defecate!*

ʔáʔhI, ʔáʔhinI? *I have dirtied myself.*

ʔaná·, ʔanó· *it hurts!* (pointing to place); *sore place, cut; command to child to get away from thing or place where it might get hurt.*

[1] The material for this paper was gathered on a field trip sponsored by Columbia University to the Comanche Indians living near Indiaboma, Oklaboma during the summer of 1940.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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115 159 177 797 872 [212] They teach us the men. We all sitting around there. When she tell us how Jesus was born, we just laugh and act silly and our matron would say, "Don't laugh." Then we ask her, "Did you see the baby?" You know, things like that . . . the older girls and us ask her questions like that. We just laugh about it. All the time we thought it was silly for them not to go and see the baby when it was born. Yeah, we learn how to write and learn how to spell, and arithmetic and whatever they learn us. We caught onto it. Then the government wrote a letter to our superintendent and said to send a bunch of them to Haskell in Kansas. And they sent a bunch of them over there and they went to school up there for about three years and they come back and they were grown and they all got married, but I didn't go. My mother wouldn't sign the papers and my dad wouldn't let me go. "No, we don't want her to go up there. She might run off or she'll freeze to death or somebody might kill her on the road." So a bunch of us girls, we didn't go. And a bunch of them went. My brothers went. They were younger than I and they went. And my mother said, "No, she's not going, but you boys could go. Boys are tougher than the girls." That what she told my brothers and so they went. I didn't care nothing about it either way.

During the summer vacations she would return to her home, which at that time was situated along Chandler Creek in Comanche County, Oklahoma.

115 159 241 I never did go places because we didn't have no places to go in them days . . . no cars or nothing. When we come out of school we just stay home all summer. Help my father with the work and everything he's got. He had lots of crops. My brothers cultivate that corn. I have to ride the horse for them and keep it on the row because the corn was so high that the horse would keep eating back and forth and my father would make me ride that horse to keep him on that line so he won't be eating the tops of the corn. They take turns, three of my brothers, while I be riding that horse all day, all day. In the morning we go plow till noon and then we go to dinner and then we go back and plow again till we get through with it. My father used to teach us to work, you know.

115 159 593 756 868 824 It was during summer vacation prior to her last year at school that Sanapia's mother offered to train her to become a doctor. Sanapia was reticent at first, but combined pressure from her mother and maternal grandmother persuaded her to at least consent to the first phases of this training program, that of learning to identify in their natural habitat the various floral medicines which her mother used in doctoring.

The Middle Years

115 159 756 868 [871] [582] Sanapia left school when she was fourteen years old, and her activities for the next three years were in the main involved with the training program her mother and uncle had established to teach Sanapia all she would need to know to become an eagle doctor. By her seventeenth year Sanapia had successfully completed her training and possessed all the skills, knowledge, and supernatural powers which she would employ in doctoring after she passed menopause. During the period of training her mother had dissuaded her from marriage so that she would

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
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be able to give her full attention to learning the skills of the eagle doctor. Much of this dissuasive effort was also aimed at Sanapia's older brother since it was the brother who had the prerogative of giving his sister away in marriage. However, after her training both the mother and the older brother immediately joined in a combined effort to find Sanapia a good husband.

Sanapia, age 16 (left) and her young sister (right). Taken in Lawton, Oklahoma, 1912.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
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vegetables, and seventy-five cents for smoking tobacco and sweets for the children.

Most Indian families lived in meager comfort if the head of the household neither drank nor gambled. Of course, Indians who were compulsive gamblers lowered their families' standard of living also. The gambler's family had a feast-or-famine existence at best.

There is this to be said for gambling money—much of it stayed in the tribe, while money spent for liquor was gone forever. It is easy to understand why decent people deplored the selling of whiskey to these wards of the government.

One recurring incident of Comanche drinking, however, became an amusing interlude to people living close to our store. It occurred in the little inland town of Faxon, Oklahoma Territory, and began immediately after the opening of Comanche land for homesteading in 1901.

The old couple involved in the incident have children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren living. Let's call the father of the family Old Warrior. He was one of the better-to-do Indians in worldly goods. He had quite a few horses, a few beef cattle, a good hack, a nearly-new small lumber wagon, and good harness, and the family as a whole owned several stock saddles.

But when Old Warrior and his woman came to town for whiskey they never drove. They would ride double on a little, fat, gentle mare, the kind of mount the Indians termed a squaw horse—meaning a safe horse for anyone to ride. It was on such a mount the little folks learned to ride solo. Instead of a saddle, Mr. and Mrs. Old Warrior rode on a blanket, folded so both could sit on it.

Of course the mount was a dead giveaway, as they only used the little mare when they came for whiskey. Another giveaway was that they would arrive in town near dusk, long past the time they would start for home when driving. The first year or two, when not drinking, they would take a roundabout road home. But on whiskey nights, their errand accomplished, they rode straight for home, point to point across the prairie.

Ordinarily they were a friendly family, and once their other errands were attended to, they made our store their stopping place. They always tied their horses to our hitchrack, if there was room. But when on a whiskey trip, they left their friendliness at home and never came to our store. Nor did they enter any other place of business.

For some time there was a vacant store building just to the east